



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services



Dannel P. Malloy
Governor

Morna A. Murray, J.D.
Commissioner

Jordan A. Scheff
Acting Deputy Commissioner

**DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENTAL SERVICES TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE**

March 4, 2015

Senator Gerratana, Representative Ritter, and members of the Public Health Committee. I am Morna A. Murray, J.D., Commissioner of the Department of Developmental Services (DDS). Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony regarding **Proposed S.B. No. 683 AN ACT CONCERNING SUPPORTIVE HOUSING FOR PERSONS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES**.

The issues associated with housing for individuals with disabilities are complex and the housing and related services are expensive. Like all of us, persons who have a disability must attend to the costs and the complexities associated with caring for a home, (e.g., paying rent/mortgage, heat, electricity, water, insurance, home maintenance, etc.). However, because persons with disabilities often have a limited income, they often must apply for and maintain eligibility for various assistance programs associated with housing (e.g., rental assistance, HUD housing, heat assistance, food stamps, etc.). They also often have to cope with issues such as limited availability of affordable housing options, housing discrimination, etc. These issues greatly increase the difficulty of addressing an individual's housing needs. Most persons with disabilities need some type of assistance to help them address activities-of-daily-living (e.g. they may require assistance with personal care, cooking, cleaning, laundry, home maintenance, banking, etc.). Access to these supports is often based upon eligibility and availability.

As S.B. No. 683 is a proposed bill, it does not provide DDS with much detail as to what "a pilot supportive housing project for persons with intellectual disabilities" might entail for the department. Supportive housing as an option for persons with intellectual disability to live in the community is one that DDS embraces and has had success in implementing over the years. How this pilot program would differ from some of the supportive housing options DDS already offers would need to be detailed before DDS could appropriately comment on the benefits or drawbacks of such a pilot program.

One concern the department does have with moving forward on this pilot program is that the funding for a supportive housing pilot program is not included in the Governor's proposed budget for FY16 and FY17. Although the proposed bill says that the proposed pilot program

Phone: 860 418-6000 ♦ TDD 860 418-6079 ♦ Fax: 860 418-6001

460 Capitol Avenue ♦ Hartford, Connecticut 06106

www.ct.gov/dds ♦ e-mail: ddsct.co@ct.gov

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would be funded “within available state and federal resources,” it is not clear whether the funding for the pilot program would be expected to come out of some other DDS budgeted service line item or what federal resources for a pilot program might be available.

Thank you again for the opportunity to submit testimony on [S.B. No. 683](#). Please contact Christine Pollio Cooney, DDS Director of Legislative and Executive Affairs at (860) 418-6066, if you have any questions.